

The Conception of Angels in Jewish Biblical Translations

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Smolar and Aberbach, in their important work on Targum Jonathan to the Prophets, state correctly that “belief in the existence of angels ... was almost universal among Jews during the Talmudic age.”¹ There is hardly a targum, whether of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, or the Hagiographa, that does not mention angels. But even a cursory look at the targums reveals that they are not all the same, neither in their method for rendering references to celestial beings (such as **בני אל / בני אלהים**, **מלאך**, **עדה אל**, **בני אלהים**, **קדושים**, **שרפים**, **שטן**) nor in their angelology.

Scholars must deal with a methodological and exegetical question: Does every use of **מלאכא** in the targums necessarily denote a celestial being? The answer certainly seems to be “yes.” The Jewish targums distinguish between a human emissary and a member of the celestial host. One way of making this distinction is found both in Onqelos and in Targum Jonathan on the Prophets (Former and Later), which employ **אזנרא** to render **מלאכים** in the sense of human messengers.² Human envoys sent by God (rather than by other men) are also rendered as **אזנרא**; thus Targum Jonathan on Ezek 30:9—“On that day, messengers shall set out at My bidding to strike terror into confident Nubia—reads: **בעדנא ית כוש** (*“at that time messengers will go out from before me in troops to frighten Cush”*).³ Targum Neofiti uses **שליח** where Onqelos has **אזנרא**.⁴

These principles employed by translators can be used to determine how they understood other biblical passages; for example, Targum Jonathan on Isa 10:5—“Ha! Assyria, rod of My anger, in whose hand, as a staff, is My fury!”—reads: **י אחראה שולטן רוגזי ומלאך שליח מן קדמי**

1 Smolar / Aberbach, *Studies* 224.

2 See Azuelos, *Flechl*. On the parallel phenomenon in the Peshitta, though not fully consistent, see Shunary, *Angels* 269.

3 Variant: **אזנרין**, which seems to be a corruption.

4 See Neofiti to Gen 32:4, 7; Num 20:14; 21:21, 22:5, 15; 24:12; Deut 2:26. Note that the Neofiti does know the word **אזנר** (part of its free rendering of **שליח** in Gen 49:21), but employs a different term for human messengers.

עליהון בלוט ("Oh, Assyria, rod of my anger, and an emissary sent from before me as a curse on them").

At first sight, the Targum takes Assyria to be the emissary—the plain meaning of the verse; but the use of מלאך rather than אונד reveals that this is not so. The words מלאך שליח מן קדמי evidently refer to the punishment meted out to Assyria and evidently allude to the angel that smote the Assyrian camp outside Jerusalem in the time of Sennacherib (Isa 37:36).⁵

Grosso modo, in the matter of how they treat angels we can classify the targums into several main groups, as a function of the relative importance they ascribe to the world of angels, from totally disregard to references that go beyond the biblical text itself.

1. Targums that never refer to Angels⁶

The following targums never refer to angels: Targum Jonathan on Jeremiah, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Haggai; the so-called Third Targum on Esther.

With regard to these prophetic books (except Haggai, on which see below), the explanation is simply that the underlying Hebrew texts themselves contain no reference to celestial beings.⁷ These targums' general close adherence to the biblical text is thus reflected by the absence of angels. One might argue, then, that these targums are not interested in angelology, given that a few angels could have been interpolated midrashically had the translators wished to do so. Because there are no angels in the original texts, however, we cannot conclude anything more than this about the targums, and certainly not that they reject the existence of angels. Whereas the explanation that they adhere closely to the Hebrew text is appropriate to the targums of these prophetic books, it cannot account for the absence of the word מלאכא in Targum Jonathan on Haggai, because Haggai 1:13 refers explicitly to מלאך ה'. But the reference is to the prophet himself, and the meaning is simply the "(human) messenger of the Lord." Targum Jonathan of course does not assign angelic status to the prophet, and therefore uses

5 Note that the locution מלאך שליח מן קדם (ה') occurs five times in Targum Chr (1Chr 14:15; 17:21; 21:15, 18, 30), each time with reference to a celestial emissary.

6 The figures in this article are based on CAL. I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. S. Kaufman for his important enterprise, which is available to all scholars.

7 מלאכים appear in Jer 27:3, but from the context it is clear that these are human ambassadors; accordingly the Targum uses אונדיא, that is, human messengers.

a glossic translation: ואמר חגי נביא דיי בשליחות מן קדם יי ("Haggai the prophet of the Lord said on a mission from the presence of the Lord").⁸

The nature of the Third Targum on Esther requires a different explanation. We agree with Goshen-Gottstein that this work, printed in the Antwerp Polyglot, is a late reworking of an extended midrashic targum, undertaken to revise it, to the extent possible, into a literal translation with no homiletic expansions.⁹ Consequently every reference to angels was deleted from the Aramaic text, as a deviation from the Hebrew original, which never refers to celestial beings. As such this work is not an authentic targum and cannot enlighten us as to the translator's beliefs about angels.

2. Targums that adhere to the biblical text and rarely interpolate or delete references to angels

Close adherence to the Hebrew may yield a targum with no mention of angels. But where such a faithful targum does include them, we may inquire about the translator's conception of angels. Does he identify with the text? Does his translation / gloss reflect his own world or is he merely rendering the text as he found it? These are thorny questions, of course, but we can offer answers, albeit incomplete, at least with regard to the later targums (such as those on the Hagiographa). If there is a fundamental disagreement in the talmudic literature and the translator follows the view of one side, we have strong grounds for assuming that he is taking a stand. For example, the Targum on Psalm 78:23-25 identifies the manna given to Israel in the wilderness with the food of the angels: "Yet he commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven; and he rained down upon them manna to eat, and gave them the grain of heaven. Man ate of the bread of *'abbîrîm*" (Ps. 78:23-25). The Targum renders v.25 as מוֹזֵן דְּנַחַת מִמְדּוֹר מִלֵּאכִיָּא אֲכָלוּ בְּנֵי נִשָּׂא ("human beings ate food that came down from the domain of the angels")—as if angels eat. This rendering coincides with R. Akiba's understanding of the verse, which Rabbi Ishmael rejected strenuously:

Our Rabbis taught: "Man ate of the bread of *'abbîrîm*," i.e., bread which ministering angels eat. This was the interpretation of R. Akiba. When these words were reported to R. Ishmael he said to them: "Go forth and tell Akiba: Akiba, you are mistaken. For do, indeed, the ministering angels eat bread? Was it not said long ago: 'I neither ate bread nor drank water' (Deut

8 See below.

9 See Goshen-Gottstein, Targum.

9:18)? How, then, do I interpret 'the bread of *ʿabbîrîm*'? As bread that was absorbed by the 248 bodily organs (*ʿeḇārîm*).” (B Yoma 75b)

This is no more than a conjecture, however.

One manifestation of the method of literal translation is that the Targum sticks closely to its source and therefore neither adds nor deletes. For example, the only angel who appears in the book of Joshua is the captain of the Lord's host (Josh 5:14-15); This is also the only angel in Targum Jonathan on Joshua. Even so, its rendering is not absolutely literal rendering: the biblical captain (*śar*) of the Lord's host, evidently the designation of some special rank among the angels, is translated in a way that eliminates this status: *מלאך שליח דשליה מן קדם יי* (“an angel sent from the presence of the Lord”). Perhaps the targum did not want to establish a hierarchy among the celestial angels;¹⁰ or it may be emphasizing the mission of the angel, who does the Lord's bidding.

Similarly, Targum Jonathan on Samuel neither adds to nor deletes from the occurrences of *מלאך* in the Hebrew text.

3. Targums that try to minimize references to angels

In several verses, Targum Jonathan on Judges transmutes an angel into a prophet. Thus Judg 2:1, “A *mal ʾāḱ* came up from Gilgal to Bochim and said ...” is rendered:

וְסִלִּיק נְבִיאָא בְּשִׁלְיָחוֹת מִן קֳדָם יְיָ... וְאָמַר (“a prophet on a mission from the presence of the Lord came up ... and said”);

so too v.4, “as the *mal ʾāḱ* of the Lord spoke these words” = *הוּא כִּד מַלְיִל נְבִיאָא*

דְּיִי,

and Judg 5:23 “Curse Meroz!” said the *mal ʾāḱ* of the Lord = *לִוְטוּ מְרוֹז אָמַר*

נְבִיאָא דְיִי.

Smolar and Aberbach believe that in these three places Targum Jonathan is trying to minimize the scope of angelic activity on Earth.¹¹ Levin sees the changes as manifestation of an anti-angel tendency evinced by the Sages (but see the next section for the countervailing tendency).¹² On the other hand, Smelik conjectures that the recasting of the angel in Judg 2 into a prophet is intended to establish a clear distinction between the two and diminish the power and status of the former. As for Judg 2, Shunary suggests that the Targum strongly disliked the appear-

10 Another possibility is that because every other occurrence of *שר צבא* in the Bible refers to a human being, here the Targum employs a different rendering to emphasize and clarify the plain meaning.

11 Smolar / Aberbach, Studies 224–225.

12 Levine, Version 71.

ance of a superhuman angel to a group of sinners.¹³ But the question remains open with regard to Judg 5:23. Is the change meant to protect the honor of angels and avoid attributing to them a negative action like cursing?¹⁴

4. Literal targums that make minor additions to the biblical text

Onqelos

There are two places where Targum Onqelos, which generally follows its source text closely¹⁵ (except for the lyrical sections of the Pentateuch), mentions angels that not explicitly found in the Bible. Thus Gen 16:14, “therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi” is rendered בִּירַא קִימַא אֲתַחַזִּי עֲלֵהּ (“the well where the angel of the Covenant appeared to her”). This translation is somewhat astonishing, because in the previous verse, which refers to a Divine revelation to Hagar, “You are a God of seeing” is rendered אַתָּה הוּא אֱלֹהִים חַזִּי כֹּלֵא (“You are the God who sees everything”). It is possible that the Targum is adhering to the narrative of the entire passages, v.7-11, in which it is always an angel who speaks with Hagar, and not, as Hagar believes in v.14, God himself.¹⁶ Another explanation is that the Targum wishes to sever the direct link between God and the alien Hagar.¹⁷

According to Exod 4:24, “the Lord encountered [Moses] and sought to kill him. The Targum attributes this action to an angel: וְעִרַע בִּיהּ מִלֵּאכָא דִּיּוּ וּבַעַל לְמִקְטִלֵּיהּ (“an angel of the Lord met him and sought to kill him”). A desire to preserve the Lord’s dignity and avoid saying the He wanted to kill someone may be behind the change. Still, the expression “angel of the Lord” makes plain the angel was acting on behalf of God.

13 Shunary, *Angels* 273.

14 Cf. Smelik, *Targum* 470.

15 There are no references to angels in Deuteronomy or in Targum Onqelos on that book.

16 See Chester, *Revelation* 93.

17 See Azuelos, *Angelology* 67.

Targum Jonathan on the Prophets

There are only two places in all of Targum Jonathan on Judges and Samuel where an angel stands in for God. "The Lord has gone out before you" (Judg 4:14 and 2Sam 5:24) is rendered by מלאכא דיוי נפיק לאצלהא ("an angel of the Lord has gone out to prosper ahead of you").¹⁸ According to Smolar and Aberbach, this is an attempt to avoid anthropomorphism,¹⁹ but the inconsistent rendering of the same and parallel expressions make this conjecture somewhat doubtful. Note, however, that Targum Jonathan on these books, with its generally literal nature, differs on this point from Targum Jonathan on the Later Prophets.

Targum Jonathan on Kings hews close to the biblical text in seven passages.²⁰ In 1Kgs 19:11-12, however, the account of Elijah on Mt. Horeb, it expands on the original Hebrew and adds details that do not even seem to be implied by it:

MT	Targum Jonathan	
And behold, the Lord passed by,	And the Lord appeared	והא יוי מתגלי
and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord,	And before Him the camp of the wind-angels, breaking mountains and shattering rocks in the presence of the Lord,	וקדמוהי משרית מלאכי רוחא מפרקין טוריא ומחברין כיפאי קדם יוי
but the Lord was not in the wind;	but the Divine Presence was not in the camp of the wind-angels;	לא במשרית מלאכי רוחא שכינתא דיוי
and after the wind an earthquake,	And after the camp of the wind-angels the camp of earthquake-angels,	ובתר משרית מלאכי רוחא משרית מלאכי זיעא
but the Lord was not in the earthquake;	but the Divine Presence was not in the camp of the earthquake-angels;	לא במשרית מלאכי זיעא שכינתא דיוי
and after the earthquake a fire,	And after the camp of the earthquake-angels the camp of the fire-angels,	ובתר משרית מלאכי זיעא משרית מלאכי אישתא
but the Lord was not in the fire;	but the Divine Presence was not in the camp of the fire-angels;	לא במשרית מלאכי אישתא שכינתא דיוי

18 So too the Targum on 1Chr 14:15.

19 Smolar / Aberbach, Studies 225.

20 T-Jon. on 1Kgs 13:18; 19:5, 7; 2Kgs 1:2, 3, 15; 19:35.

And after the fire
a still small voice.

And after the camp of fire
A voice praising softly.

ובתר משרית אישתא
קל דמשבחין בחשי

This is a classic example of the fact that even a literal translation like Targum Jonathan on Kings sometimes interprets the biblical text in accordance with its conception of angels. Whereas the Bible clearly refers to natural phenomena that precede the Divine revelation, the Targum refashions the scene into an epiphany accompanied by angels, a common motif in various targums.²¹ Here the Targum seems to be combining the idea of “God’s camp” in Gen 32:3, which the Palestinian targums (the Neofiti and, with slight differences, Fragment Targum and pseudo-Jonathan) render as “מִן קֳדָם דְּמַלְאכִין” (“camps of angels from before the Lord”) with “He makes the winds His messengers, fiery flames His servants” (Ps 104:4), for which the Targum is “דַּעְבְּד אִיגְדִּי סְרֵהוּבִין הִיךְ רוּחָא שְׁמִשׁוּי תְּקִיפִין הִיךְ אִשָּׁא מְצַלְהָבָא” (“Who made his messengers as swift as wind; his servants, as strong as burning fire”).²² It is possible that Targum Jonathan introduces the angels in order to make a clear distinction between God (the Divine Presence) and His angels. In any case, we learn that the translator conceived of “camps” of different types of angels: wind-angels, earthquake-angels, fire-angels, and perhaps angels that praise the Lord quietly. This is the only locus in any targum in which these several types of angels are mentioned.

5. Targums that make extensive additions to their *Vorlage*

Unlike the literal or almost-literal targums, a diverse group of targums refer extensively to angels, some more and some less. This category includes the following (from those with fewer additions to those with more):

1. The Palestinian targums on the Pentateuch
2. The various targums on the Hagiographa
3. Targumic Toseftas on the Prophets
4. Pseudo-Jonathan

The relatively large amount of angel-related material incorporated into these targums allows us to peer into the worlds of the translators and their audiences and to learn more about their ideas about the world of

²¹ See below.

²² Is the Targum referring to human emissaries?

the angels. As with the literal targums discussed above, we must look at each sub-group separately before considering what they have in common.

5.1 The Palestinian targums on the Pentateuch²³

The targums in this group are MS Neofiti 1 (= Neofiti); those from the Cairo Geniza; the Fragment Targum (P); the marginal notes in MS Neofiti 1; and the targumic toseftas on the Pentateuch.

Before we look at the translators' approaches we should consider a phenomenon common to all of them: the tendency to replace the word *Elohim* in the biblical text with "angels."²⁴

They had diverse motives for this substitution. It may be a matter of exegesis. For example, Gen 32:1 describes Jacob's encounter with the angels of God; hence "the camp of Elohim" in the next verse is rendered "מלאכין מן קדם" ("angels from the presence of the Lord") by the Neofiti as and "מלאכים קדישין מן קדם" ("holy angels from before the Lord") by the Fragment Targum. But it may also be a matter of doctrine and theology. For example, the Neofiti and Geniza targums make "you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5) refer to angels: "וההוון כמלאכין מן קדם" ("And you will be like angels in the presence of the Lord"), evidently in order to preserve the essential difference between God and human beings. A desire avoid anthropomorphism can explain the Neofiti and Geniza targums on "you have striven with God and with men" (Gen 32:29 [28]), "ארום אתרברבת עם מלאכין מן קדם" ("because you have overcome angels from the presence of the Lord") and the Neofiti on "I have seen Elohim face to face (Gen 32:31 [30]), "ארום חמית מלאכין מן קדם" ("because I have seen angels from the presence of the Lord") and "to see your face is like seeing the face of Elohim" (Gen 33:10). A different idea may underlie the Targum on Exod 4:24-26, namely, protecting the honor of God: in the Neofiti, Fragment Targum, and marginal notes to the Neofiti, "the Lord encountered [Moses] and sought to kill him. ... He let him alone" becomes "וירע יתיה מלאכא מן קדם" ("an angel from the presence of the Lord met him and wanted to kill him ... and the angel let him alone"). It is not the Lord who seeks to kill Moses, but an

23 On angelology in the Targums on the Pentateuch see chiefly Chester, Revelation; Shinan, Angelology; Azuelos, Angelology.

24 On a parallel phenomenon in the Peshitta and the Septuagint see Shunary, Angels 275-276.

angel. Even here, though, the link between God and man survives, because the angel is a Divine emissary.²⁵

Some of these targums seem to aggrandize the status of angels, and others to minimize it. Angels can indeed distinguish between good and evil; and there is something daunting and threatening in their appearance. On the other hand, when Gen 32:29 is translated so that Jacob wrestles with multiple angels (and not a single angel),²⁶ their power is diminished, because one man bested all of them. But it is doubtful whether the translators were aware of such theological inferences.

5.1.1. Types and categories of angels

מלאך מותא 'angel of death' (P on Exod 4:25–26),
 מלאכא דמחבלה 'angel of destruction' (P, Neofiti marginalia on Exod 4:26),
 מלאכי מרומא 'angels on high' (Neofiti, P on Gen 22:10; Neofiti, P on Gen 28:12; Neofiti on Gen 32:27; Neofiti, P on Deut 32:3),
 מלאכין קדישין 'holy angels' (P on Gen 28:12, 32:3; Neofiti, P on Deut 33:2–3),
 מלאכא דונוך 'angels of Your wrath' (P on Exod 15:7),
 מלאכין דרחמין 'angels of mercy' (Neofiti on Gen 24:7; Exod 23:20 [מלאך דרחמן, Num 20:16]; Neofiti marginalia on Exod 23:23; 32:34),
 מלאכי שירותה 'angels of service' (Neofiti on Deut 32:3; Neofiti marginalia on Exod 14:20 (מלאכי שירותה),
 שרף 'seraph' (Neofiti, P, Neofiti marginalia on Gen 30:22); שרפין (P on Exod 12:2).

5.1.2. Names of angels

The Palestinian targums rarely refer to angels by name. Michael and Gabriel, identified as such in the biblical book of Daniel, are mentioned only in the long expansion of Gen 38:25. In the Neofiti and Geniza targum, Michael brings Tamar the three objects belonging to Judah; while in the targumic tosefta of this verse the angel is Gabriel. In both versions the angel is explicitly said to be acting at the initiative of the Lord. A third angel, Sariel, is mentioned by name in the Neofiti on Gen 32:25, and identified with the "man" with whom Jacob wrestled.

²⁵ See above.

²⁶ See Goshen-Gottstein, Fragments 49.

5.1.3. Roles

5.1.3.1. Fixed roles

1. Ministering to God. The very expression מלאכי שירותה 'angels of service' attests to angels' role of ministering to God. This role, with no explanatory details of what it encompasses, is also found in the Neofiti on Exod 33:23 and the Neofiti marginalia on Exod 33:19. According to the Neofiti marginalia on Exod 14:20 (see below, §4), it is the ministering angels who sing God's praises.
2. Escorting God at Divine epiphanies. According to the Neofiti on Deut 33:2–3, the Lord was accompanied by "tens of thousands of holy angels" when He appeared on Mount Sinai.
3. Escorting human beings in their travels. According to the Neofiti and the Fragment Targum on Gen 28:12, angels accompany a person when he travels way (when he leaves Eretz Israel?).
4. Singing God's praises. This role is found in Neofiti on Gen 32:27 and the Geniza Targum, which refer to the angelic lauds sung at first light. According to the Neofiti marginalia on Exod 14:20, the ministering angels did not sing on the night of the Exodus.

5.1.3.2. One-time missions

In addition to the roles of angels that are specified by their designations, mentioned above, angels are also mentioned as relating to or intervening in events on earth. For example, during the Binding of Isaac angels proclaim during the event that Abraham and Isaac are צדיקין יחידאין דאית בנו עלמא ("the only righteous men in the world") (P, MS Vat.).²⁷ According to the targums on Gen 28:12, the earthly angels accompanying Jacob call on the angels in heaven to look at Jacob, whose image is engraved in the Throne of Glory, and the celestial angels do indeed come down to do so. The angel of death, or, according to another version, the angel of destruction, seeks to kill Moses (Exod 4:25–26); the angel *Rogez* ("wrath") smites Egypt (Fragment Targum on Exod 15:7, MS Paris). According to the Neofiti on Exod 23:20–23 and Num 20:16, the angel Raḥamim ("mercy") accompanies Israel on their journey from Egypt to Canaan.

27 In the Neofiti and Fragment Targum MS Paris the proclamation is attributed to a *bat-kol*.

5.1.4. Limitations of angels

An angel is assigned only one mission (Neofiti on Gen 18:1; Fragment Targum). Some domains that are under the absolute control of God and not in the province of angels: "ארבע מפתחין דאינן מסירי דב י רבון כל עלמא יי" לא מסרן לא למלאכא ולא לשרף מפתחא דמטרא ומפתחא דפרנסתא ומפתחא דקבריה ומפתחא דעקרתא ("There are four keys that are given over to the Master of the all the worlds, the Lord, and He did not convey them to an angel or to a seraph: the key of rain and the key of prosperity and the keys of the grave and the key of barrenness" (Neofiti on Gen 30:22; so too Fragment Targum and Neofiti marginalia). The limits on what angels can do are emphasized by the Neofiti and Fragment Targum on Deut 32:3), according to which angels cannot pronounce the ineffable name of God until Israel has pronounced "Holy Holy Holy" three times.²⁸

5.1.5. Miscellaneous topics and motifs

5.1.5.1. Angels who take on human form

There are a number of examples of angels who appear in human guise: "תלתא מלאכין בדמות גברין" ("three angels with the semblance of men"; Neofiti on Gen 18:2); the "man" who wrestles with Jacob is ... מלאך ("an angel ... with the semblance of a man"; Neofiti, Neofiti marginalia, and Geniza Targum on Gen 32:25); the man whom Joseph meets when he is searching for his brothers is also מלאך בדמות גבר (Neofiti on Gen 37:15); the Geniza Targum uses similar language in Gen 32:28: אתרברבת עם מלאכין קדישין ... בדמות גברין ("you overcame holy angels ... with the semblance of men").²⁹

In this light we can understand the various targums on Gen 32:3, which report that Jacob was not sure of the identity of those approaching him at Maḥanaim: emissaries of Laban, emissaries of Esau, or celestial emissaries. This is the only place where the Neofiti employs מלאכין for human envoys, using the word for the imagined ambassadors of both Laban and Esau as well as for the heavenly host.

²⁸ In the *qedushah*?

²⁹ So too ח"ש שני? (תרגום שני?), cited by Samuel Masnut ad loc. in his *Genesis Zuta*, ed. M. Hacoheh. See Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments* 49.

5.1.5.2. A hierarchy among angels:

According to the Neofiti and Geniza Targum on Gen 32:27 [26], the angel who wrestles with Jacob is ריש למשבחי(י)א ("the chief of those who praise").

All of these examples indicate that the translators and their audiences had a fairly well developed conception of angels, which they drew on when they translated the Bible.

In one place, the penchant for interpolating angels, even where they are not mentioned or alluded to in the biblical text, produced a ludicrous result: the targum of Gen 24:60, as found in MS Paris 110 of the Fragment Targum and the Neofiti marginalia. The verse describes the blessing that Rebecca received when she left her father's house as "May you grow into thousands of myriads." Whereas the Neofiti renders this almost literally, ומניך יקמוין אלפין וריביון ("may thousands and tens of thousands arise from you"), and the version of the Neofiti marginalia is in the same spirit – יהי רעווא דמניך יפקוין אלפין ורבבן אוכלוסין צדיקין ("may it be [His] will that thousands and tens of thousands of righteous troops come from you"), the Fragment Targum diverges spectacularly from the plain meaning: מניך יקמוין אלפין וריבבן דמלאכין קדישין ("may thousands and tens of thousands of holy angels come from you")! So does a version found in the Neofiti marginalia, ורבבי דמלאכ[ין] צדיקין ("and myriads of holy angels"). Although this bizarre translation may be due not to the translator but to the copyist, there is little doubt that it is a consequence of an over-enthusiastic belief in angels and the common collocations of huge numbers with angels, based on the description of the revelation by the Ancient of Days in Dan 7:10 (it too, be it remembered, in Aramaic): "a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

5.2 Targums on the Hagiographa

Like the Palestinian targums on the Pentateuch, those on the Hagiographa tend to mention angels even when they are not explicitly present in the biblical text. Unlike the older targums, however, those on the Hagiographa use both the native word מלאכא as well as אנגלא, from the Greek ἄγγελος, to designate a celestial being.³⁰

30 According to Weiss, Targum 77–78 (Hebrew), מלאך is not rendered by אנגלא in the targums on either Psalms or Job. Not, we may add, in the Targum of Chronicles.

The targums on the Hagiographa interpolate many references to angels. For example, the Targum of Psalms refers to them no fewer than 30 times, although there are only ten such references in the original Hebrew; the book of Job has six references to celestial beings other than the adversary Satan (angels, sons of God, holy ones), but there are 15 in the Targum. All five Scrolls taken together mention angels only once (Eccles 5:5); but the targums on them refer to angels more than 20 times, mainly those on the Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. Chronicles invokes angels in only two incidents – David’s construction of the altar (1 Chron 21) and the downfall of Sennacherib’s host (2Chr 32) – but the targum of Chronicles adds 12 more references to angels. The parsimonious exception among the targums on the Hagiographa is that on Proverbs (which, as is well known, is closely related to the Peshitta). Proverbs itself refers to a celestial messenger only once – “an evil man seeks only rebellion, and a cruel *mal’āk* will be sent against him” (Prov 17:11); other than this verse, which the targum renders literally (ומלאכא נכוריא/אכוריא), the targum does not refer to angels.

Despite the diversity of targums on the books of the Hagiographa, we will present an overall picture, followed by the specific hallmarks of particular targums.

In the targums on the Hagiographa, as in the ancient Palestinian targums, the translators often substitute “angels” for the Hebrew *‘elohim* or *‘elim*. We find this phenomenon in the targums on Psalms,³¹ on Job,³² and on Chronicles.³³ Another substitution understands Hebrew שמים ‘heaven’ as referring to angels and translating accordingly.³⁴

31 See, for example, the Targum on Ps 8:6 (5), “You have made him little less than *‘elohim*” = מלאכיא (“than angels”); on Ps 29:1, “sons of *‘elim*” = כחי מלאכיא (“bands of angels”); Ps 69:35 (34), “Heaven and earth shall extol Him” = ישבחוניא מלאכי שמיא (“the angels of heaven will praise him”); Ps 82:6, “I said you were *‘elohim*, and sons of the Most High (*‘elyon*), all of you” = כאנגלי מרומא כולכון (“I said that you are deemed to be like angels and all of you are like angels on high”); Ps 86:8, “There is none like You among the *‘elohim*, O Lord” = לית בר מינד באנגלי מרומא (“there is none like you among the angels on high”), and Ps 89:7.

32 Job 15:15: “He puts no trust in His holy ones; the heavens are not guiltless in His sight” = הן בקרשי עלאי לא יהימין ואנגלי מרומא לא זכאן קדמוהי (“He does not put His trust in the celestial holy ones above and the angels on high are not guiltless before Him”).

33 1Chr 16:25, “For the Lord is great and ... held in awe by all *‘elohim*” = רוחיל הוא על כל (הלך האלהים) (“and feared by all the angels”); 1Chr 17:21, “God went (הלך האלהים) and redeemed as His people” is rendered דאחגלי מלאך שליח מן קדם יי למפרק (“an angel sent from the presence of the Lord appeared in order to redeem a people for himself”); cf. T-Jon. on the parallel 2Sam 7:23, “God went (הלכו אלהים) and redeemed as His people” = דאולו שליחין מן קדם יי למפרק ליה עם (“messengers from the presence of the Lord came to redeem a people for himself”). See also 1Chr 12:23 (22), “a vast camp like a camp of God” = משרי מלאכיא דיי (“a camp of the an-

We also encounter variants among manuscripts, with one variant reflecting a literal translation of a verse and the other interpolating angels where the Hebrew has none. For example, the targum of Psalm 65:2 (1), "to You silence is praise" exists both in a literal translation, **קדמך מתחשבא היך שתיקוּתא תושבחתא** ("before You silence is considered to be praise"), and in a free version that introduces an angelic choir, **קדמך מתחשבא היך שתיקוּתא תושבחתא דמלאכיא** ("before You silence is considered to be the praise of the angels"). Similarly, for Psalm 89:6 (5), "the heavens praise thy wonders, O Lord," we find both the literal **וידון שמיא** and the free **וידון אנגלי שמיא** ("the angels of heaven praise ..."). Although such variants are not particularly frequent, they do reflect different translation methods, one of which tends to incorporate angels even where there is no exegetical need to do so.

Whereas in the last-cited verses there is some basis, however feeble, for the targum's reference to angels (such as "heaven"), angels are interpolated in other passages where there is no real textual anchor for them. For example, "in Your goodness You provide for the needy, O God" (Ps. 68:11 [10]) is rendered **משיירית [כיתין] מלאכיא לטובא לעניי** ("you appointed [a troop of] angels to do good to the poor"). The targum of Psalm 91 is based on the belief in demons and the modus operandi of the Angel of Death. Thus verse 5, "You will not fear terror by night nor the arrow that flies by day," becomes **לא תרחל מן דלוּחא דמוזיק ניררא דמלאך מוּתא דשרי בימנא** ("You will not be not afraid of the terror of demons who walk at night, of the arrow of the Angel of Death that he shoot during the day").

Similarly, the targum of Psalm 140:12 (11), "let evil hunt the violent man to destruction," reflects a belief in the Angel of Death, who hurls the wicked into hell: **הטופא [ועבדין] ביש יצודיניה מלאך מוּתא ינקפיניה** ("the angel of death will hunt down the robber [and those who do] evil, he will beat him down to Gehinnom").

The references to angels in a targum may also play a theological role, in that it is a means to avoid anthropomorphism. For example,

ארום נפק מלאך שליח = 1Chr 14:15, "for God has gone out before you" ("because an angel sent from the presence of the Lord has gone out"), and the beginning of the same verse, where "the sound of marching" is rendered **קל מלאכיא** ("the sound of the angels coming to your assistance").

- 34 See, for example, the targum on Ps 50:4, 6; 57:4, 6; 97:6; on Job 20:27; on 1Chr 16:31, "Let the heavens rejoice" = **יחדון אנגלי מרומא ויבועין יתבי** ("let the angels on high rejoice") and 29:11. The penultimate phrase in the targum on 1Chr 29:11, **ברקיעא דלך יי מלכותא** ("Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom in the heaven and You are exalted over all the angels in heaven") is evidently meant to correspond to the words "in heaven ... to You, Lord, belong kingship and preeminence."

Lamentations 3:57, "You came near when I called to You" is rendered מלאכא שליחת ("You sent an angel to save me").

5.2.1.Types and categories of angels

	Psalms	Job	Cant	Lam.	Esther	Chronicles
מלאך (ד) מוּחַא	91:5;	18:13;		1:20 ³⁵		1 Chr 21:18
"angel of death"	140:12	28:22				(דמוּחַא/דמוּחַנא)
מלאך מחבלא			2:9	1:20 ³⁶		
"destroying angel"						
מלאכא מטרח עיבא		37:11				
"angel that moves the cloud"						
מלאכא דממני על עבד		3:3				
"the angel in charge of conception"						
מלאכין דמשמשין קדמוּדי			5:10			
"angels that serve before Him"						
מלאך דרחמין					I 1:10	
"angel of mercy"						
מלאכא דשינוּחא					I 1:10	
"angel of confusion"						
מלאכי שירותא		28:27				
"angels of service"						
קמינוּרייא + פרקליטא		33:23				
"accuser" + "defender"						

35 According to the Eastern tradition of the targum: מוּחַא על מוּחַנא ("[like] an angel in charge of death").

36 According to the Western tradition of the targum: מוּחַא די ממני על מוּחַנא ("[like] the destroying angel that is in charge of death").

5.2.2. Names of angels

	Canticles	Eccles.	Esther	Chronicles
Gabriel			I 7:8	2Chr 32:21 the angel that smites the Assyrians
Michael	8:9, מיכאל רבהון דישׂראל “Michael the prince of Israel”		II 6:1 [אל] מיכאל רב חיילא דישׂראל “Michael the commander of the army of Isr[ael]”	2Chr 32:21 the angel that smites the Assyrians ³⁷
Raziel		10:20		
Samael:				
Job 28:7				

Considering the length of the Hagiographa and the targums on it, very few angels are cited by name. Sometimes the name identifies an angel mentioned in the Bible (as in the Targum on Chronicles); sometimes it identifies an angel not explicitly present in the Hebrew text (the targums on Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther).

5.2.3. Roles

Fixed roles

From the epithets attached to angels we can infer a number of roles that pertain to groups of angels or individual angels. The locutions מלאכי שירותא ‘angels of service’ and קדמוהי דמשמשין מלאכין ‘angels who serve before Him’ refer to the angels (all or some of them) whose role is to serve God. But here, as in the other targums, the nature of this service is not made explicit.

Another role mentioned also by the Palestinian targums is singing the praises of God. For example, in the targum on Psalms 96:1 the angels are called on to praise the Lord, even though the biblical text does not suggest this; and the call to “Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him on high” (Ps. 148:1) is made to refer to the song of the Angels:

37 Alternate version: “Michael and Gabriel.”

שבחו ית יהוה ברייתא קדישא מן שמיא שבחו יתיה כל חילי אנגלי מרומא
 "Praise the Lord holy creatures from the Heavens; praise Him all the
 host of angels on high." Nor is it astonishing that "who gives songs in
 the night" (Job 35:10) is made to refer to the evensong of the angelic
 choir: דמסדרין אנגלי מרומא קדמוהי תושבחתא בליליא ("that the angels on
 high sing praises before Him at night").³⁸

The targums on the Five Scrolls introduce angels who conduct the
 souls of the righteous to Paradise (targum on Cant 4:12) and angels
 who record the actions of human beings (targum on Eccles. 12:5).

Furthermore, these are the only targums that refer to the tasks of
 individual angels who are responsible for conception, clouds, and con-
 founding human beings.

5.2.4. Limitations of angels

A clear notion that there are limitations of angels is hard to find in the
 targums on the Hagiographa. Nevertheless, it is in a literal targum, that
 on Job, that we directly encounter this idea. According to Job 15:15,
 God "puts no trust in His holy ones; the heavens are not guiltless in His
 sight." The targum, הן בקדישי עלאי לא יהימין ואנגלי מרומא לא זכאן קדמוהי
 ("He does not put His trust in the celestial holy ones above and the
 angels on high are not guiltless before Him"), is close to literal, except
 that the "holy ones" are specifically of the upper world (i.e., angels)
 and "angels" replaces "the heavens." At first glance this is disparaging
 angels; in fact, this lower status is only relative to that God. Neverthe-
 less, some translators of Job (and transmitters of the targums) rejected
 such a conception of angels; the parallel statement in Job 4:18, "Even in
 his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error," is
 rendered in several different ways. One version replaces the angels
 with flesh-and-blood emissaries: הן בעבדוהי נביא לא יימן ובאזגדוי ישיי עילא
 ("Even in His prophet-servants He does not trust and to human messen-
 gers He attributes falsehood"), whereas another tradition of the targum is
 closer to the biblical text: הן בעבדוי נביא לא יימן ובמלאכוי ישיי עילא
 ("Even in His prophet-servants He does not trust and to His angels He attributes
 falsehood").³⁹

Another type of limitation can be found in the First Targum on
 Esther 6:1, where the angels are described as panic-stricken by Esther's
 cries, to the point that they erroneously believe that the end of the

38 On the angels' song see also the Targum on Cant 2:3.

39 See Targum on Job, ed. Stack, *32.

world has come. What is more, here the angels are presented as dependent on the one who sends them, in that they appear before the Lord and tell him what is happening.

5.2.5. Miscellaneous topics and motifs

5.2.5.1. God appears in the company of many angels

Faced with the syntactic and lexical obscurity of Psalm 68:18 (17), רכב אלהים רבתי אלפי שנאן אדני במ סיני בקדש, the targum aligns itself with the tradition that understands שנאן as “angel(s),” two thousand of whom accompanied the Divine chariot(s) at Sinai: ארתיכין די אלהא ... חרין (”The chariots of God ... two thousand angels guide them”).

The targum on 1Chr 29:11, “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty ...,” expands the “glory” to refer to the Revelation on Sinai, where God appeared in the company of מלאכיא כתי ‘troops of angels’.

5.2.5.2. The vast number of angels who serve God

The Targum turns the “ten thousand” among whom the beloved is distinguished (Cant 5:10) into ריבוא רבון דמלאכיא דמשמין קדמויהי (”myriads of myriads of angels who serve Him”).

5.2.5.3. Angels who take on human form

The First Targum on Esther 7:7 adds the piquant detail of Ahasuerus’ observing עשרתי מלאכי דמיין לעשרתי בנוי דהמן קטעין ית אילנא דבנינחא גוואה (”ten angels resembling the ten sons of Haman who were cutting down the tree in the inner park”) to explain why his brief airing in the palace garden failed to cool off his temper.

5.2.5.4. Initiatives by angels that are counter to God's will

The Targum of 2Chr 33:13 recounts how angels shut the gates of prayer against Manasseh king of Judah to keep his supplication from being received. Here angels are acting on their own initiative, and in a fashion that is opposed to the Divine mercy. In the end a special passage under the Throne of Glory is created so that Manasseh's prayer can bypass the locked gates. In this contest between the Lord and the angels, the Lord prevails.

5.3 The Targumic Toseftot on the Prophets⁴⁰

Despite the great diversity of the targumic expansions on the Prophets, with regard to their time and place of composition, about twenty of them⁴¹ evince a tendency to provide greater details about what the biblical text conceals or to expand it considerably.

5.3.1. Types and categories of angels

The targumic expansion of Isa 33:7 enumerates various types of angels: מלאכי שלמא אנגלי מרומא זיע מלאכי רחיצא ... מלאכי שלמא ("celestial angels, angels of trembling, angels of anger..., angels of peace").⁴² Some of them are outside their domain (picking up on חצה in the Hebrew), but the angels of peace, interpolates the Targum, are located in the camp of the Divine Presence. The targumic expansion of Ezek 1:1 interpolates קדישי עליונין ("celestial holy ones"), מלאכי מרומא ("angels on high"), מלאכין קלילין ("quick angels of wrath"), מלאכין אכזראין ("cruel angels"). Most of these do not have parallels elsewhere in the targumic literature (except for the generic "angels on high" and "cruel angels").

40 On the notion of angels in the targumic toseftot, see Kasher, *Angelology* 168–191.

41 Out of a total of 150.

42 It is not clear whether there are four categories here or only three, since "celestial angels" may be a generic term followed by its species.

5.3.2. Names of angels

Ariel/Uriel	The captain of the Lord's hosts, who appears to Joshua (targumic tosefta of Josh 5:13). The Targum adds details of his vast size: אורכיה כמן ארעא ועד שמיא ("his length from earth to heaven and his breadth from Egypt to Jericho")
Gabriel	Targumic tosefta of 2Sam 21:17; of Isa 21:5 (along with Michael); and of Ezek 1:1
Angel of Death	Targumic tosefta of 1Kgs1:1, which offers a detailed description of David's vision of the Angel of Death: ריויה דחיל וקליה בהיל אימתא ודחלתא על אפיה לבושהי שנין ברנזי ובחמא ("his appearance awful, his voice terrifying, fear and horror on his face, his garments scarlet with anger and wrath"); of 1Kgs19:10
Metatron/Mitatron	Targumic tosefta of Ezek 1:1, responsible for a large number of firmaments and referred to as שרא רבא ("the great prince of Israel") ⁴³
Michael	The angel who smites the camp of Assyria (targumic tosefta of 2Kings 19:35 and Isa 21:5 (along with Gabriel); of Isa 57:15.
Satana	Targumic tosefta of Zech 3:1–2 (a literal rendering of the Hebrew "Satan," but unlike Targum Jonathan's הטאה ("sinner" [or "accuser])
Sama'el	Targumic tosefta of Isa 57:15, also referred to as סטן

5.3.3. Roles

5.3.3.1. Fixed roles

We can learn about some tasks of angels from their epithets, such as **מלאכא דמוחא** 'Angel of Death', **סטנא** Satana, who is the adversary of human beings (according to the targumic tosefta of Zech 3:1–2, specifically the angel accusing the high-priest Joshua). In addition, the accounts of their deeds sometimes shed light on certain angels' fixed

43 The text is not clear; it is possible that according to the Targum he saves the entire world because of his mercies. Further study is required.

roles. For example, according to the targumic tosefta of Ezek 1:1, two angels (according to one variant, “two quick angels of wrath”; according to another, “two cruel angels” or “cruel angels”) cast human beings (here Nebuchadnezzar) down to the underworld, and hurl fire and brimstone on the wicked in hell to punish them for their misdeeds.

5.3.3.2. One-time missions

The angel Uriel comes to punish Israel for failing to be meticulous in regular Torah study (targumic tosefta of Josh 5:14). An angel helps the fugitive run back to Shiloh from the Israel rout at Ebenezer (targumic tosefta of 1Sam 4:12). Angels consult among themselves about how to help David in his duel with Goliath (targumic tosefta of 1Sam 17:42). Michael and Gabriel are called to punish Babylon and to establish the new kingdom of Persia and Media (targumic tosefta of Isa 21:5). According to the targumic tosefta of Isa 33:7, angels influence the Lord to rescind his order to Abraham to sacrifice his son. Angels dance at Adam’s wedding (targumic tosefta of Ezek 28:13). An angel slaps Belshazzar when he drinks from the Temple vessels (targumic tosefta of Ezek 37:3). All of these are examples of angels’ involvement in various incidents, to punish or to rescue, or as responding to isolated incidents.

5.3.4. Limitations of angels

The angels who are closest to the throne of glory cannot know and speak the praises of God (targumic tosefta of Ezek 1:1).⁴⁴

5.3.5. Miscellaneous topics and motifs

Contests among the angels

Two targumic toseftas describe conflicts among angels. In 2Sam 21:17 this accompanies David’s combat with Ishbi-benob, and has a physical aspect, as the tutelary angel of Israel faces off against the tutelary angel of the Philistines. This reflects the notion that events in the upper world parallel those on earth.

44 Cf. T-Jon. on Isa 6:2, “with two he covered his face” = בתרין מכסין אפיהו דילא חזי (“with two they cover his face so that he cannot see”).

Another sort of contest is described in the targumic tosefta of Isa 57:15. Here we have a debate, conducted on the Day of Atonement, between Michael, who is defending Israel, and Sama'el, who is prosecuting them. The debate ends with God's proclamation of Michael's victory.

As far as I know, these are the only examples of contests between angels in the targumic literature. Both derive from the same manuscript, which survives only in a single modern copy.⁴⁵

5.4 Pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch⁴⁶

Of all targums, pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch has the most references to angels, some of which appear only in this targum.

Here too one can find the Hebrew *Elohim* rendered as "angels" (Gen 3:5; 4:1; 31:24, appearing to Laban in a dream; 32:29, 31; 33:10; 35:7; Exod 4:24). This targum is so enamored of angels that even the statement in Num 15:40, "be holy to your God," is rendered, not literally, but as *וְתִהְיוּ קְדִישִׁין הִי כַמְלָאכִיא דְּמַשְׁמִשְׁין קֳדָם יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיכֹן* ("and you shall be holy like the angels that serve the Lord your God")!

5.4.1. Types and categories of angels

מְרוּמָא חִיילִי 'armies of the higher regions' (Exod 14:24),
מְלָאךְ חַבְלָא 'destroying angel' (Exod 4:25-26); *מְלָאךְ חַבְלָא* 'the destroying angel' (Exod 12:23, 42); *מְלָאכִין חַבְלִין* 'destroying angels' (Exod 12:12); Deut 9:19:
מְלָאכִיא חַבְלִיא - אַף וְחִימָה וְקֶצֶף וּמַשְׁחִית וְחֶרֶן 'destroying angels: wrath, fury, anger, destruction, and Indignation.'
מְלָאךְ מוּתָא 'angel of death' (Exod 12:13),
מְלָאכִי מְרוּמָא 'angels of the higher region' (Gen 22:10, 19; 32:27),
מְלָאכִי מַשְׁבַּחִיא 'praising angels' (Gen 32:27),
מְלָאכִיא דִּי מַשְׁמִשְׁין קֳדָמוּ 'angels that serve before Him' (Gen 3:22);
מְלָאכִיא דְּמַשְׁמִשְׁין קֳדָמִי 'angels that serve before Me' (Exod 20:20); *מְלָאכִיא דְּקִיּוּמִין וּמַשְׁמִשְׁין קֳדָמִי* 'troops of angels that stand and serve before Me' (Exod 33:23); *כַּמְלָאכִיא דְּמַשְׁמִשְׁין קֳדָם יְיָ* 'like angels that serve before the Lord' (Num 15:40); *וְכִיתִי מְלָאכִיא... דְּמַשְׁמִשְׁין קֳדָמוּ* 'and troops of angels ... that serve before Him' (Deut 10:14),

45 MS Manchester Gaster 1478, a typewritten transcript of a lost manuscript.

46 On the conception of angels in this Targum, see: Shinan, *Angelology*; Shinan, *Targum* 120–134; Mortensen, *Priesthood* 378–389.

קדישא מלאכיא 'angels of holiness' (Gen 28:12), מלאכיא קדישין 'holy angels' (Gen 32:2),
 חבורן דמלאכי 'angels of service' (Gen 18:20; Num 20:16); שירותא 'a company of angels of service' (Deut 34:6),
 שירותא סרכן 'lord of wisdom' [= Michael] (Exod 24:1),
 חכמתא רבני 'teachers of wisdom' (Deut 34:6, referring to the four angels mentioned in the Targum) עממין מלאכיא רברבי 'seventy angel, princes of the nations' (Deut 32:8).

5.4.2. Names of angels

Uriel	Deut 34:6: He lays Moses down on the bier on which he dies—a unique tradition.
Gabriel	Gen 37:15: He is the “man” whom Joseph meets; v.17: he tells Joseph what he overheard from “behind the veil” about the Hivvites’ plan to attack the brothers. Exod 24:10: During the bondage in Egypt, he brings a brick that contains a murdered child to heaven and sets it as a bench underneath the Lord’s footstool. Deut 32:9: Together with Michael he praises the Lord and His people Israel. Deut 34:6: Along with three other angels he prepares the bier for the dead Moses.
Zaganzagel	Exod 3:2: He is the angel who appears to Moses in the burning bush.
Yofiel	Deut 34:6: He prepares the bier for the dead Moses, along with three other angels (the only reference to this angel in this context).
Yefefe	Deut 34:6: He prepares the bier for the dead Moses, along with three other angels (the only reference to this angel in this context).
Mitatron	Gen 5:24: He is the same as Enoch, who becomes the angel abr arps (“great scribe”). Deut 34:6: He prepares the bier for the dead Moses, along with three other angels (the only reference to this angel in this context).
Michael	Gen 32:25: He announces the election of Levi. Gen 38:25: He returns to Tamar the signs she received from Judah.

	Exod 24:1: He summons Moses to ascend to the Lord. He is referred to as סֵרְכֵן חֲכָמָא 'the Lord of Wisdom' (the only reference to him in this context).
	Deut 32:9: Along with Gabriel He praises the Lord and his people Israel.
	Deut 34:3: He will deliver Israel in the future when they are in distress.
	Deut 34:6: He prepares the bier for the dead Moses, along with three other angels (the only reference to this angel in this context).
Sama'el	Gen 3:6: He is the Angel of Death. Does he seduce Eve?
	Gen 4:1: He impregnates Eve; Cain is their child.
Shamhazzai and Azael	Gen 6:4: The Nephilim

The names of three of these seven angels – Zaganzagel, Yofiel and Yefefe – occur only here in the targumic literature, all in the context of Moses' death.

5.4.3. Roles

5.4.3.1. Fixed roles

Service of God

This is indicated by the expressions **מִלְאכֵי דְמִשְׁמַשְׁיָן קֳדָמֵי/קֳדָמֵי** ("angels who serve before Him") (Gen 1:26; 3:22) and **מִלְאכֵי שִׁירָוּתָא** ("angels of service") (Gen 18:20).

Singing songs of praise to God

According to the targum on Gen 32:27, the man who wrestles with Jacob is one of the angels whose mission is to sing God's praises, and this morning is his first opportunity to do so. We can also infer from the targum that the lauds are sung at dawn.

The tutelary angel of a nation and language

According to the targum of Gen 11:8, the Lord came down to the builders of the Tower of Babel accompanied by 70 angels, one for each of the 70 nations, and each responsible for a different language and script. The implication is that the angels taught human beings their various languages and scripts.

5.4.3.2. One-time missions

Angels are involved in earthly events in many and various ways. An angel brings the animals to Noah's ark and directs them to enter it (Gen 6:20). Angels proclaim the special righteousness of Abraham and Isaac at the time of the binding of Isaac (Gen 22:10). Angels lead Isaac from Mt. Moriah to the House of Study of Shem (Gen 22:19). An angel pours out for Jacob old wine preserved since the Creation (Gen 27:25). Jacob is accompanied by angels on his journey (Gen 28:12). An angel protects infants in Egypt (Exod 15:2). Angels cut down a tree planted by Abraham so that it may be used to build the tabernacle in the wilderness (Exod 26:28). The tenth of the twelve miracles from which Phineas benefits when he slays Zimri and Cozbi is that an angel turns the couple over so that all Israel can see their shame (Num 25:8). Serah daughter of Asher is conducted to Paradise by sixty myriads of angels (Num 26:46).

5.4.4. Limitations of angels

1. Every angel can perform only a single mission (Gen 18:2).
2. Angels are banished from the Divine Presence for revealing God's secrets (Gen 28:12).
3. Through their prayer, the three Patriarchs overcome three destroying angels who, sent by the Lord, are trying to harm the Israelites, by praying to the Lord. Moses, too, prays, and overcomes two other destroying angels. Afterwards Moses employs the Ineffable Name to bury them in Moab (Deut 9:19).
4. Shamhazzai and Azazel, the Nephilim, are banished from heaven to earth, where they corrupt the ways of humanity (Gen 6:4).

5.4.5. Miscellaneous topics and motifs

Pseudo-Jonathan is one of the latest Jewish targums. Consequently it is not astonishing that some of the topics and motifs featured in it parallel those found in the other Palestinian targums on the Pentateuch. In pseudo-Jonathan, too, the Lord is accompanied by an angelic escort when He appears to human beings.⁴⁷ Here too angels appear in the guise of human beings,⁴⁸ pretend to eat,⁴⁹ and sing the praises of God.⁵⁰

But pseudo-Jonathan also features several topics not found in any other targum:

1. The angels are created on the second day (Gen 1:16).
2. The Lord addresses angels in various contexts⁵¹ and seems to consult with them, or at least to announce His intentions to them in advance: the creation of human beings (Gen 1:26), the expulsion from Eden (Gen 3:22), the confusion of languages (Gen 11:7), and the punishment of Sodom (Gen 18:20).
3. A person may enter Paradise with a large escort of angels: Serah the daughter of Asher is conducted to Paradise by 600,000 angels (Num 26:46).
4. According to Pseudo-Jonathan on Num 25:12, the Lord promises Phineas that he will metamorphose into a deathless who will serve as the herald of the redemption at the End of Days.⁵²

Even though Pseudo-Jonathan adds more angels to its retelling of the Pentateuch than does any other targum, it is the only one to explicitly outlaw worshiping them. To the ban on making gods of silver and gold (Exod 20:20 [23]) it prefixes a broader prohibition: **לֹא תַעֲבֹדוּן לְמַסְנֹד דְּמוּת** (*“you shall not make for worship an image of the sun and moon and stars and constellations and the angels that serve before Me”*).

It is possible that this expanded version (which parallels the Mekhilta of R. Yishmael on this verse) is intended to offer a counter-

47 Gen 11:8; Exod 12:12; Deut 32:8; 33:2; 34:5, 6.

48 Gen 18:2, 16, 22; Gen 32:3, 25.

49 Gen 18:8; 19:3.

50 Gen 27:1; 32: 27; Exod 14:24.

51 On the motives for this, see Shinan, Targum 121–122.

52 See also the targum on Exod 4:13. Clearly this Targum rests on the aggadic tradition that identifies Phineas with Elijah. This tradition also provides the backdrop for the quite unexpected rendering of that same verse in the Neofiti marginalia, **בִּיד מְלָאכָא**, **מְשִׁיחָא דְּעֵתִיד לְמַשְׁחֲלָהּ בְּסוֹף יוֹמָא** (!) (*“in the hand of the Messiah-angel [or: Messiah \ Angel] who will in be sent the future at the end of days”*)—though perhaps we should read **מְלָכָא** ‘king’ instead of **מְלָאכָא** ‘angel’.

weight of sorts, so that the many accounts of angelic involvement in human affairs are not taken as an excuse for worshipping them.

6. Conclusion

Our scrutiny of the various targums has shown that they do not have a single homogeneous doctrine about angels. Although most of them do share a number of topics and motifs, such as the angelic cohort that accompanies Divine epiphanies, their role in singing the praises of the Lord, their vast number, and their occasional appearance in human form, the differences among them are greater than the similarities, with regard both to exegesis and content.

There are different inclinations about interpolating ideas about angels into the flow of the translation. Those targums that stick closely to the text and offer a literal rendering rarely insert angels. A clear example of this parsimony is offered by Targum Jonathan. Its rendering of 1Kings 19 adds camps of angels to the biblical text, in keeping with the prevalent notion that when God appears to human beings he is accompanied by angels. Except for this scene, however, it is hard to find a strong belief in angels in Targum Jonathan on the Former Prophets. Even Targum Jonathan on the Later Prophets, which does not always hew so closely to the biblical text, eschews angels, even where we might have expected to encounter them. By contrast, the targumic toseftas of the Prophets add angels whenever possible. A good example of the real difference between the different targumic approaches can be found in the different versions of Isa 33:7:

MT	Targum Jonathan	Targumic tosefta	
הן אראלם	הא כד תתגלי להון	הא כד אתגלית על אברהם אברהון	For when I
The Ere-	For when You appear to	ואמרית ליה למוותן ית יצחק הימין	appeared to
lim	them	במימרי ובתר כדון בתינייתא כד	Abraham
		אמרית ליה דייסקיניה לעלתא לא	your father
		אתעכב ואזל ובנא מדבחה...	and prom-
			ised to give
			[him] Isaac
			he believed
			in My word
			and after
			that a sec-
			ond time
			when I told

			him to offer him as a sacrifice he did not delay but went and built an altar ...
צעקו חצה cry with- out	יצוהון במרר they will cry in bitterness	קמון כל אנגלי מרומא מלאכי זיע מלאכי רחיתא וצוהון מברא למחיצתהון ...	All the celestial angels, angels of trembling [and] angels of anger rose up and cried out- side their domain ...
מלאכי שלום Angels of peace	אזנרי עממזא דאזלו לבסרא שלם the [human] messengers of the nations, who came to announce peace,	ואפילו מלאכי שלמא דקיימין במשריתא דשכינתא	And even the angels of peace who are in the camp of the Divine Presence
מר יבכיון weep bitterly.	תבו למהוי בכן במרר נפש cried again in bitterness of soul.	במרירותא בכיון ...	cried bitter- ly.

Here we see that despite the explicit reference in the biblical text to “angels of peace,” Targum Jonathan interprets the phrase as referring to human envoys rather than to celestial beings. By contrast, the targumic tosefta pounces on the find and expounds the verse from a strong angelological perspective. Clearly there is a vast distance between Targum Jonathan and the targumic tosefta with regard to their notions of angels. Hence we should not be surprised that Targum Jonathan resolutely refuses to see angels in Isa 24:21, “On that day, the Lord will punish the host of heaven in heaven and the kings of the earth on earth.” Targum Jonathan renders the verse, which refers to a mythic eschatological war to take place between the upper and lower worlds, as if it intends an exclusively earthly event: ויהי בעידנא ההוא יסער יי על חילות

תוקפא דיתבין בתוקפא ועל מלכי בני אנושא דדירין על ארעא ("and it will come to pass in that time that God will visit the forces of the stronghold that dwell strength and the kings of son of men who reside on the earth"). Yet the reason for this would seem to be precisely the underlying assumption of Targum Jonathan that angels are flawless, which makes it impossible to render the biblical text according to its plain meaning. This is also how we should understand the fact that the targums do not expound the encounter between the sons of God and the daughters of men (Gen 6:1–4) as involving sinful angels. They render the expression "sons of God" in various ways, including בני רברביא 'sons of the princes' (Onqelos), בני / בני אלהא אלהיא 'judges' (one version in the Neofiti), and בני 'sons of God(s).⁵³ Only Pseudo-Jonathan, strongly influenced by ideas about angels, incorporates the tradition about the fallen angels.⁵⁴ Similarly, the Targum on Psalm 82 assumes that the biblical text is referring to human judges rather than celestial beings. The furthest it will go is to render verse 6, "I said you were *Elohim*, and sons of the Most High (*ʿElyon*), all of you" as a simile: אנא אמרית היך כמלאכיא אתון חשיבין והיך אנגלי מרומא כולכון ("I said that you are deemed to be *like* angels and all of you are *like* angels on high"). These examples, and others, show us that we are not necessarily dealing with a rejection of the world of angels, but with the translators' latent assumptions about angels.

Our survey of the targums has proceeded in increasing order, from those that rarely mention angels to those that do so frequently. We find that this is also a chronological order: the older targumim (to judge by the linguistic data) have fewer references to angels; the later targumim, more references. Thus angels are few and far between in Onqelos and Targum Jonathan. The Palestinian targums on the Pentateuch incorporate a few more angels than can be found in the underlying biblical text. Finally, the targums on the Hagiographa, Pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch, and the targumic toseftas of the Prophets all demonstrate a strong tendency to interpolate angels into their glosses on the Bible. It is plausible that the oldest targums, meaning Onqelos on the Pentateuch and Targum Jonathan on the Prophets, were produced under the watchful eye of the talmudic sages, who, for various reasons, were sparse in their mentions of angels.⁵⁵ By contrast, the Palestinian targums on the Pentateuch, the targums on the Hagiographa, Pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch, and the Targumic toseftas reflect popular

53 For a discussion of the targums on this passage, see at length Alexander, Targumim 60–71; Goshen-Gottstein, Fragments II 37–38.

54 Angels are also mentioned in one version of MS Neofiti on v.2 and in the Neofiti marginalia on v.4, but with no condemnation or criticism.

55 See Urbach, Sages 135–136.

views rather than official doctrines, and are accordingly much more open to incorporating ideas about angels alongside other mystical and esoteric doctrines.

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